

CONFIDENTIAL PTO3309

PAGE 01 HARARE 00873 010810Z
ACTION AF-00

INFO LOG-00 NP-00 ACQ-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 DS-00 VC-00
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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8314
INFO RWANDA COLLECTIVE
SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L HARARE 000873

SIPDIS

LONDON FOR GURNEY

PARIS FOR WILLIAMS

BRUSSELS FOR MCKINLEY AND HINSON-JONES

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/01/11

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [ZI](#) [CG](#) [BE](#)

SUBJECT: MUGABE OFF TO BELGIUM

REF: HARARE 522

CLASSIFIED BY CHARGE D'AFFAIRES EARL M. IRVING FOR
REASONS 1.5 B/D.

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PAGE 02 HARARE 00873 010810Z

1. (C) ACCORDING TO BELGIUM EMBASSY FIRST SECRETARY ALEXIS DE CROMBRUGGHE, PRESIDENT MUGABE WILL TRAVEL TO BELGIUM ON OR ABOUT MARCH 5. THE TRIP HAS ITS GENESIS IN BELGIAN FOREIGN MINISTER LOUIS MICHEL'S JANUARY INVITATION TO FOREIGN MINISTER MUDENGE TO COME TO BELGIUM TO DISCUSS THE CONGO. MUDENGE'S RESPONSE, CROMBRUGGHE JOKED, WAS, "COULDN'T I BRING THE PRESIDENT WITH ME?" MICHEL COULD HARDLY REFUSE, THE BELGIUM DIPLOMAT CONCLUDED.

2. (C) COMMENT: WE SEE MUGABE'S TRIP AS AN EFFORT TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE OPENING LEFT BY THE ASSASSINATION OF LAURENT KABILA TO ACHIEVE PEACE IN THE CONGO AND A RECOGNITION OF BELGIUM'S INCREASING IMPORTANCE AS A PLAYER IN THE PEACE PROCESS. WE ALSO SUSPECT THAT MUGABE MAY TRY TO USE HIS VISIT TO BRUSSELS TO BURNISH HIS IMAGE AS A STATESMAN AND PEACEMAKER AND APPEAL TO THE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT FOR ASSISTANCE IN SECURING WESTERN GOODWILL FOR HIS DOMESTIC AGENDA. END COMMENT.

IRVING

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